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Osaka University

Preface to Special Feature 2: “Japanese Studies” Research Papers in English

NICHOLAS LAMBRECHT*

This special feature introduces research from scholars who attended English-medium events and academic courses sponsored by the Osaka University Graduate School of Letters during the 2019–2020 academic year. With their particular focus on research pertaining to Japan, these projects represent only a small fraction of the international work in cultural studies and other humanities fields taking place on the campus of Osaka University. This work will only increase in importance as the English-medium programs of the Graduate School of Letters continue to mature. Whatever one’s views on globalization, it is clear that the dissemination of research in multiple languages is an essential step toward increasing the influence of its conclusions, and the students and scholars who took part in these programs and contributed to this volume of *The Anthology of Transborder Cultural Studies* are performing investigations that are worthy of attention in any language.

First we have a piece by **John Bundschuh**, a Fulbright-Hays Fellow from The Ohio State University who performed dissertation research in the Osaka University Graduate School of Letters this year. The paper is based upon a talk given in January 2020 as part of a series of Global Japanese Studies Research Workshops inaugurated in 2019. Bundschuh’s study, “Rethinking Japan’s Earliest Written Narratives: Early-Heian *Kundokugo* Translations of Chinese Buddhist Texts,” challenges our understanding of Heian-period narratology and the development of early Japanese literature.

Next is an article by **Sanada Teruki**, a graduate student of the Graduate School Faculty of Arts and Letters at Tohoku University. Sanada’s work is representative of the research introduced at the Graduate Conference in Japanese Studies 2019, an international event that brought together graduate students and professors at Osaka University’s Nakanoshima Center on December 20, 2019. This was the third annual Graduate Conference in Japanese Studies, an important opportunity to present original scholarship in English made possible by generous support from Osaka University and the Consortium for Global Japanese Studies. Presenters at the conference prepared talks on literature, sociology, education, thought, and public policy. Following their talks, they were

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given feedback by scholars from across Japan and beyond, including **Ann Sherif**, Professor of Japanese Literature at Oberlin College in the United States; **Inaga Shigemi**, Professor of Art History at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in Kyoto; **Unoda Shoya**, Professor of Japanese Studies at Osaka University; and **Yufei Zhou**, Senior Research Fellow at the German Institute for Japanese Studies in Tokyo. I would personally like to thank all of these scholars for their contributions to the success of the conference. The day’s schedule included:

***Funato Masaya** (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies): “Crossing Closed Borders in Early Modern Japan: Ishida Baigan and the History of Practical Thought”

***Kawauchi Yuko** (Ritsumeikan University): “Kabuki Translated: How English Translations Influenced the Theatre Experience of Foreign Audiences in Modern Japan”

***Dominik Gorka** (Heidelberg University/Osaka University): “‘Grasping the Actual State’: Problems in Quantifying *Taibatsu* at Japanese Schools”

***Sanada Teruki** (Tohoku University): “The Relationship Between School Bullying and Socioeconomic Status in Japan” (later revised to “The Relationship Between Bullying and Socioeconomic Status: Analysis Using PISA Data”

***Cho Sejin** (Osaka University): “Identity and Decolonization: Minority Education at Korean Korean Schools in Japan”

***Alexandra Humes-Yoneyama** (Sophia University): “The Role of Fortune Tellers in Contemporary Japanese Society”

We look forward to organizing the event again in the coming academic year.

The next piece in this special feature is an essay by **Jake Odagiri**, a graduate student in Japanese literature at Osaka University. Odagiri has completed the Osaka University Global Japanese Studies program, one of the “graduate minors” available as part of the university’s Graduate Programs for Advanced Interdisciplinary Studies. Odagiri served as a teaching fellow in two English-medium courses that were part of the program this year. His essay, “Repackaging Dazai Osamu and the Process of Branding ‘Ningen Shikkaku,’” examines paratextual aspects of Japanese- and English-language editions of Dazai’s *Bannen* and the work best known in English as *No Longer Human*.

Finally, my own essay “Globalizing Japanese Studies: Interests, Expectations, and Expertise” reflects upon pedagogical and disciplinary concerns associated with the field of “Japanese Studies” in Japan, the contemporary academic environment, and special possibilities and problems involved

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in the incorporation of foreign Japan scholars into the Japanese university system. The piece is informed by my experiences teaching Japanese Studies courses in Japan and by the perspectives and concerns of students I have taught at Osaka University this year.

Together with Special Feature 1, this edition of *The Anthology of Transborder Cultural Studies* shows how productive it can be to create a working space where scholars can meet and exchange ideas freely. The coming year promises to present new challenges to such interactions—health challenges, logistic challenges, political challenges, and more. Reviewing the scholarship we have seen developed this year, I expect that we will rise to meet these challenges and continue to play a part in advancing meaningful interregional exchange, both across borders, and in resistance to their imposition.